

INSTALLATION WITH UKRAINIAN FLAG

LOWELL HAYES

JULY 1 - DECEMBER 10, 2022

COMMUNITY GALLERY



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BOONE 150

LOWELL HAYES

Boone 150, the Town of Boone's Sesquicentennial celebration, kicked off in January 2022 and continues throughout the year with a series of events and commemorations, including parades, historic walking tours, musical performances, and exhibitions. The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts is proud to honor this important community milestone by showcasing and celebrating artists with deep roots in Boone and across the High Country.

The current exhibition features the work of Lowell Hayes who has lived in Valle Crucis since 1972 and has long contributed to the vibrant art scene in Watauga County.

His work has been shown at The National Museum of American Art in Washington DC. He appeared on Charles Kuralt's Sunday Morning on CBS, and was interviewed on NPR, The New York Times, and Art in America. Hayes' artwork has been featured in two previous exhibitions at the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, including a solo exhibition, *The Hemlocks! The Hemlocks! Grief and Celebration* by Lowell Hayes in 2011.

Lowell Hayes' Installation with Ukrainian Flag has been supported, in part, by a generous donation from Lynn Sharpe Hill.



EXHIBITION STATEMENT

I find it impossible right now, at the beginning of this exhibition – which will continue into December – to make a visual work relevant to the distressing events in Ukraine. Every day we are seeing images on the media of the cruel murder and destruction caused by the Russian invasion. Civilians massacred, millions displaced, their homes, schools, and hospitals annihilated! The emotional condition they create in me is not a state in which I can make art, at least art relevant to Ukraine’s experience.

For about 30 years I have been making work which celebrates the beauty of the forest, as a reaction to global warming, not about anyone’s culpability, but hoping to intensify our feelings about the Earth, which I call love. Because our love of Earth is the best motivation to take care of Earth.

Our feelings about what is happening to Ukraine — my feelings, my deep disappointment in humanity, my helplessness to “do anything about it” are not something of which I can make a visual expression. This installation tries to express at least that emotional, psychological quandary.

I have asked the writer Nan Chase to collaborate in this effort.

Nan Chase, whose work has appeared in practically every regional magazine as well as in *The New York Times*, is a Boone resident and established author. She has contributed several literary selections to this project, including a section from a memoir written by her grandfather who lived in the province of Chernihiv Oblast. Chernihiv was the location of one of the first struggles between Russian and Ukrainian forces in 2022.



CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NAN CHASE

"I consider the development of Russia as a free and democratic state to be our main political and ideological goal. We use these words fairly frequently, but rarely care to reveal how the deeper meaning of such values as freedom and democracy, justice and legality is translated into life."

·The Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, April 25, 2005 Vladimir Putin, b. 1952, Leningrad

"I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination."

·The First Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln, March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln, b. 1809, Larue County, Kentucky; d. 1865, Washington, D.C.

"Within the huge brightly painted sleigh, under bearskin covers, one could discern little human cubs anxious to be released by their uncles and aunts -- eager for the warm embraces, silly chatter, and laughter which followed. I often found myself crying from the sheer joy of it all."

·An unpublished memoir of Nan Chase's grandfather, Ilya Grigorovich Koltunov, b. 1890, Chernigov Oblast, Ukraine; d. (Harry Koltnow), 1962, New York City



CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NAN CHASE

"...the narrative of psychic death that accompanied the Russian nobility and the luckiest Jews as they fled annihilation; anti-Jewish pogroms of unspeakable violence and terror raged through the shtetls and the estates in the years surrounding Russia's 1905 revolution, with some of the worst violations in the Chernigov Oblast..."

·Dear Once: Letters of a Rogue Russian Father (unpublished) Nan K. Chase, b. 1954, Dayton, Ohio

"...the very decision to set forth on the journey had been a kind of death, involving the total abandonment of all previous life, mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters who would never again be seen, all sentiment banished, the most elementary comforts necessary relinquished."

·Where I Was From, Joan Didion, b. 1934, Sacramento, California; d. 2021, New York City

ARTIST BIO

Lowell Hayes was born near old Butler, Tennessee in 1936. He has a B.A. from Lynchburg College and a B.D. from the University of Chicago. He has lived in Valle Crucis, North Carolina since 1972.

Over the course of his career, Lowell Hayes has made art in many styles and mediums. His work has been shown at The National Museum of American Art in D.C. and has been featured on the show, *A TVA Commonplace*. He appeared on Charles Kuralt's *Sunday Morning on CBS*, was interviewed on NPR, by The New York Times and Art in America. He has had his works featured on several magazine covers and in dozens of public and private collections including the Tennessee State Museum.

His work has been featured in two previous exhibitions at the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, including a solo exhibition, *The Hemlocks! The Hemlocks! Grief and Celebration* by Lowell Hayes in 2011.

<http://www.lowellhayesartist.com/>



CURATORIAL STATEMENT

What do you think an artist is? A fool who, if he is a painter, has only eyes, if he is a musician, only ears, if he is a poet, only a lyre for all the cords of the heart, or even, if he is a boxer only muscles? On the contrary, he is at the same time a social creature, always wide-awake in the face of the heart-rending bitter or sweet events of the world and wholly fashioning himself according to their image. How could he fail to take an interest in other people and by virtue of what ivory-tower indifference could he detach himself from the pulsating life they bring near to him? No, painting is not made to decorate houses. It is a weapon of offensive and defensive war against the enemy.

Pablo Picasso[i]

Guernica has become the iconographic anti-war work by an artist of the twentieth century. The monumental painting was created by a Spanish artist living in France in the lingering international anger and sorrow over a brutal bombing raid on a small Basque town in Northern Spain by Fascist warplanes, immediately followed in the skies by fighter planes that machine-gunned down people fleeing into the neighboring fields. Thinking now about the war in Ukraine and seeing the images in the news and on social media, *Guernica* is the first artwork that comes to mind as it did for so many following the tragedy of 9/11.



Faith Ringgold

The American People Series #18: The Flag is Bleeding, 1967

National Gallery of Art

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

The first page of *The Living Arts* in the New York Times on Thursday, September 13, 2001 carried a detail of Picasso's *Guernica*. Columnist Bruce Weber wrote: "Nothing provokes the artistic sensibility like grief. In the artist, events like those of Tuesday morning (September 11, 2001) bring about a meeting of universal emotions and an individual will to unearth them, expose them, understand them and accept if not outlast them.... artists have always combated grave tragedy with grave beauty."

The visual arts are critical to exploring and understanding issues of violence in contemporary society precisely because artists use a symbolic language to develop and express their ideas. We have yet to see or recognize the artwork that will begin the difficult work of making cultural sense, if, indeed, any sense what-so-ever-is to be made of the unprovoked war on Ukraine. As Watauga County artist **Lowell Hayes** says in his introductory statement to his *Installation with Ukrainian Flag*:



Jasper Johns
Flag, 1954-55
Museum of Modern Art

I find it impossible right now, at the beginning of this exhibition – which will continue into December – to make a visual work relevant to the distressing events in Ukraine. Every day we are seeing images on the media of the cruel murder and destruction caused by the Russian invasion. Civilians massacred, millions displaced, their homes, schools, and hospitals annihilated! The emotional condition they create in me is not a state in which I can make art, at least art relevant to Ukraine's experience.

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CURATORIAL STATEMENT



Pablo Picasso
Guernica, 1937
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia

To express his deep sorrow, Hayes has covered one of his iconic Hemlock mixed media paintings, *Old Growth Imagined*, 2010, with a distressed Ukrainian flag.

The flag of any sovereign country is a powerful signal. Traditionally and legally, U.S. flags and the flags of many countries should not touch anything beneath them, nor be displayed, used, or stored, in such a manner as to permit the flag to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged in any way. Further, "the flag should never have placed upon it, nor on any part of it, nor attached to it any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture, or drawing of any nature." [1]

Many artists, however, have used flags as powerful symbols in their artwork as patriotic or provocative statements: Frederic Edwin Church, *Our Banner in the Sky*, ca. 1861; Gordon Parks, *American Gothic, Washington, D.C.*, 1942; Jasper Johns, *Flag*, 1954-55; Robert Frank, *Parade—Hoboken, New Jersey*, 1955;

Faith Ringgold, *The American People Series #18: The Flag is Bleeding*, 1967; Fritz Scholder, *The American Indian*, 1970; Ming Smith, *America Seen Through Stars and Stripes* (New York), 1976; May Stevens, *Dark Flag*, 1976; Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled (Flag)*, 1979-80; Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*, 1987; Dread Scott, *What is the Proper Way to Display a U.S. Flag*, 1988; Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Questions 66)*, 1991; Nam June Paik, *Video Flag*, 1996; Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, *I See Red: McFlag*, 1996; David Cole, *American Flag (Toy Soldiers #12)*, 2002; Thornton Dial, *Don't Matter How Raggy the Flag, It Still Got to Tie Us Together*, 2003; Jonathan Horowitz, *Three Rainbow American Flags for Jasper in the Style of the Artist's Boyfriend*, 2015; Robert Longo, *Untitled (Torn Flag)*, 2018; and Carlos Martiel, *Fundamento*, 2020, to name just a few.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT



While Hayes uses the Ukraine Flag, rather than the American Flag in his installation, he is making a powerful visual statement very much in line with the anguish of the artists who feel the need to address current events in their creative practices. Like his colleagues, who “take an interest” in the events of the world, Hayes has had his heart broken as have so many people around the world who are grieving with and for the Ukrainian people.

Hayes invited writer Nan Chase to contribute a selectin of literary quotes to accompany his project. One of the sections she chose was from a memoir written by her grandfather who lived in the province of Chernihiv Oblast. Chernihiv was the location of one of the first struggles between Russian and Ukrainian forces in 2022.

"Within the huge brightly painted sleigh, under bearskin covers, one could discern little human cubs anxious to be released by their uncles and aunts -- eager for the warm embraces, silly chatter, and laughter which followed. I often found myself crying from the sheer joy of it all."

From an unpublished memoir of Nan Chase's grandfather, Ilya Grigorovich Koltunov, b. 1890, Chernigov Oblast, Ukraine; d. (Harry Koltnow), 1962, New York City.

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CURATORIAL STATEMENT



In direct contrast to her grandfather's remembered joy, Chase also included this despondent quote from Joan Didion's *Where I Was From*:

"...the very decision to set forth on the journey had been a kind of death, involving the total abandonment of all previous life, mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters who would never again be seen, all sentiment banished, the most elementary comforts necessary relinquished."

Visual artists, writers, performers, all creative people create dialogue both within and outside the walls of art galleries – they must if art is going to continue to be relevant in contemporary society. Placing difficult artwork in a university gallery creates a safe place to continue the dialogue begun by the artist. Lowell Hayes asks the viewer not just to examine the artwork in his installation with a disinterested contemplation, but also asks what the events are that are taking place outside the gallery walls in the “real” world as we read about them in the newspapers or deal with them in social interactions? The conversation Hayes hopes to raise are important.

[1] Juan Larrea and Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Guernica*: Pablo Picasso (New York: Arno Press, 1969) 13.

[1] Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/4/8>

BEHIND THE SCENES



BEHIND THE SCENES



INSTALLATION IMAGES



INSTALLATION IMAGES



INTERACTIVE PROMPT

The Turchin Center invites guests to leave a respectful response to the unprovoked atrocities in Ukraine on the bulletin board. Contribute to the virtual bulletin board [here](#):



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

World Monuments Fund

Amnesty International

UNICEF

Voices of Children Foundation

Project Hope

Choose Love

Wonder Foundation

International Council of Museums – Ukraine

The Ukrainian Museum of New York / Stand with Ukraine

Direct Relief – Ukraine Relief

Doctors Without Borders -- Ukraine

Save the Children

UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency

DrumStrong Ukraine

National Bank of Ukraine Humanitarian Assistance

International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

International Committee of the Red Cross: Ukraine

Samaritan's Purse International Relief

International Rescue Committee – Ukraine

International Medical Corps – Ukraine



THANK

YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

